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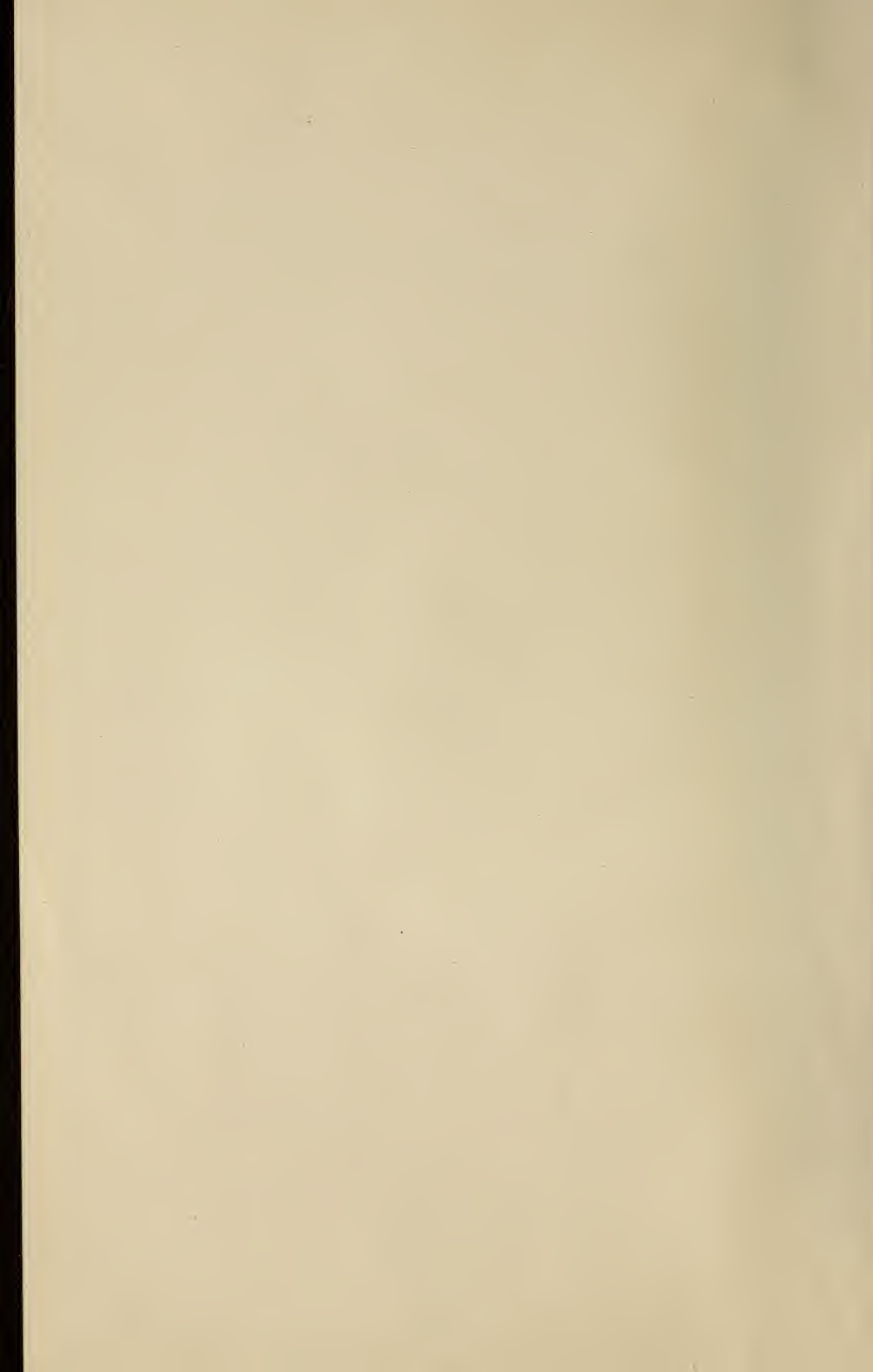
Address at the laying of
the corner stone of the
Douglas monument at Chicago
Sept. 6, 1866.

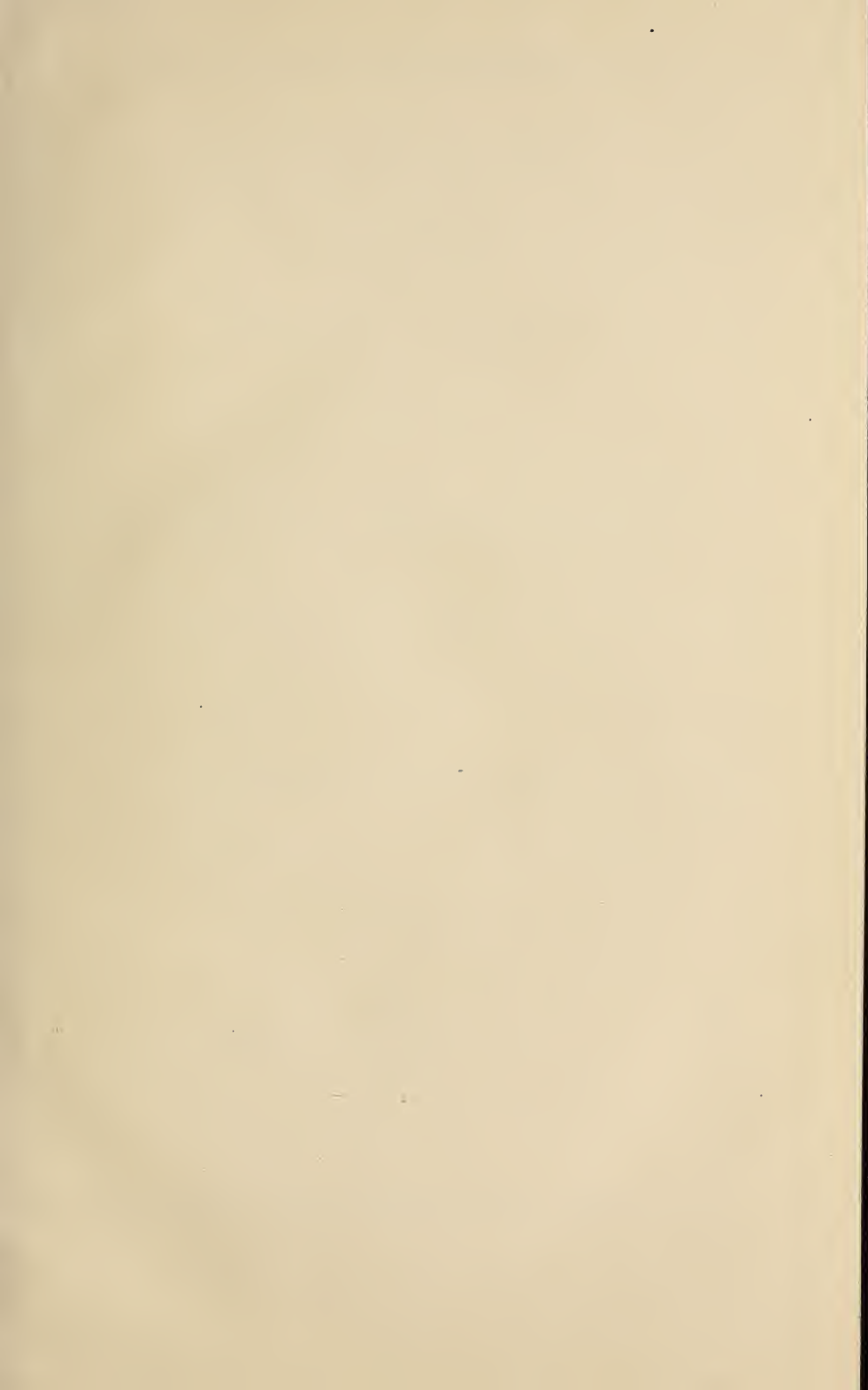
By Major-General John Dix.



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ADDRESS

AT THE LAYING OF THE

CORNER-STONE

OF THE

DOUGLAS MONUMENT

AT CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER 6, 1866.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN A. DIX.

NEW YORK :

EDWARD F. CROWEN.

FOR SALE BY

THE AMERICAN NEWS COMPANY, 119 AND 121 NASSAU ST.

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THE NEW YORK PRINTING COMPANY,
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NEW YORK.

ORATION.

FELLOW-CITIZENS—The scene in which we are actors to-day, with all its surrounding circumstances and accompanying recollections, has no parallel in this or any other age. We are assembled within the confines of a city numbering over two hundred thousand inhabitants, distant one thousand miles from the ocean, where thirty-four years ago nothing was seen but an unbroken expanse of prairie on the one side, and the outspread waters of Lake Michigan on the other, both extending far beyond the compass of the sight; nothing heard but the voice of the great inland sea from the sands on which its waves were breaking, or the more unwelcomed voices of the savage tribes who roamed over these majestic plains. Where, within half the span of an ordinary life, there was one vast solitude, all is full of activity, and progress, and the treasures of a polished civilization. Industry and the arts display their stores with a bounteousness

which might well be mistaken for the accumulated surpluses of centuries; science is teaching the truths which have been developed by the researches of the past, and enlarging the boundaries of human knowledge by new discoveries; education is universally diffused; and, above all, the temples which religion has reared to the service of God, from every precinct and almost every street of the city, point their spires to Heaven, as it were in acknowledgment of the merciful protection under which it has triumphed over all the obstacles to its growth, and become strong and self-reliant and prosperous. Fellow-citizens—In no other country of the present, in no age of the past, could such a miracle of civilization have been wrought! And this great city and the great West, of which it is, by comparison, but an inconsiderable part, have poured out the tens of thousands who stand around me, in a mass so extended that no human voice could reach your outer ranks. You have come here to render the homage of your respect to the memory of one, who rose among you to the highest eminence for talent and for successful labor in your service. And the Chief-Magistrate of the Union, who in the council chambers of the nation stood side by side with him in the darkest hour of its peril, and espoused with equal zeal and eloquence the cause of their common country, when other men, with hearts less stout and

faith less constant, quailed before the impending storm, has come to join with you in this act of posthumous honor to an honest, courageous, and patriotic statesman, cut off in the fulness of his strength, his usefulness, and his fame. Where or when has such a concurrence of circumstances existed to inspire one with great thoughts, and yet to make him, by their very greatness, despair of giving them appropriate utterance? No one need look out of his own breast for the impulse which has gathered so vast a multitude together—a multitude which no other sun shall ever see reassembled. It is one of the strongest feelings of our nature to desire to perpetuate the memory of those who, from ties of blood, familiar associations, or valuable services, have become dear to us, and, by the will of God, have been separated from us for ever. There are thousands within the reach of my voice, who have been made painfully conscious of this instinct by the bereavements, which the unhappy domestic conflict just ended has visited upon them. When the burden of grief lies heavy on the heart, it is the first impulse of our nature to prolong the remembrance, to grave into the solid stone which shall endure when we have perished, some appropriate thought, or, it may be, the simple names, of those we have loved and lost. Kindred to these tributes of affection is the debt of gratitude which

a whole community, represented here in countless numbers, has assembled to discharge by the erection of a monument, suited in its proportions to the great qualities of him whom it is to commemorate; to lay the foundation of the structure which is to be piled up, stone upon stone, from the earth beneath our feet into the sky above us; and thus to symbolize the eminence to which he rose by his genius and his transcendent public services, above the plane of elevation where the great mass of his contemporaries stood and toiled and struggled in the hard battle of life.

Thirty-three years ago, the year after Chicago was founded, a crowd of people were assembled at Winchester, in Scott county, in this State, to attend a sale of valuable property. When it was about to commence a clerk was wanted to keep the accounts, and no one could be found who was willing to undertake the service. At this moment a youth, slender in person and feeble in health, who had come on foot from a neighboring town, joined the assembled crowd. He was at once singled out by the salesman as one competent to the service; and at his urgent solicitation, and tempted no doubt by the offer of two dollars a day, the youthful stranger accepted it. The sale occupied three days; and before it was ended he had won all hearts by his intelligence, his promptitude, his frankness, and his

urbanity. It was the general judgment that a young man of so much promise should not be permitted to leave the neighborhood. A school was provided for him, and thus as a clerk and a teacher, a stranger without friends and without means, not twenty-one years of age, relying on the talents God had given him, on an industry which never wearied, and a courage which never wavered, STEPHEN ARNOLD DOUGLAS entered upon the great field of his labor in the West. It cannot be doubted that among a people battling with the hardships of a new country, the favorable impression which his first appearance had made was confirmed by a knowledge of the difficulties he had overcome in preparing himself for active life. There was no romance in his early years. His youth was the history of hard work, and of a perpetual struggle to cultivate the talents of which he must have become conscious in his boyhood. He was born in Brandon, Vt., on the 23d of April, 1813. On the first of July ensuing, his father died suddenly while holding his infant son in his arms. The first fourteen years of his life were passed on a farm, with such advantages of instruction as the district school afforded. Having no other means of education, he apprenticed himself to a cabinet-maker, and worked two years at his trade, but was compelled to abandon it for want of physical strength. He returned

to his native town, entered an academy, and devoted himself to classical studies for a year. He then removed to Canandaigua, in New York, and remained there three years, continuing his classical studies, and for a portion of the time studying the law. In all these phases of his youth he evinced the same intelligence and the same energy which distinguished his later years. As an apprentice to a cabinet-maker he displayed a remarkable genius for mechanics, and, had not nature marked him out for eminence in another sphere of action, he might have become one of the distinguished artisans of the country. In his classical and legal pursuits he exhibited the same capacity for distinction ; and while engaged in the study of the law he completed, to use the language of his biographer, " nearly the entire collegiate course in most of the various branches required of a graduate in our best universities." He is next seen as a clerk in a lawyer's office in Cleveland, Ohio ; then travelling in the West in pursuit of employment, stopping at Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, and Jacksonville, and at last making his appearance at Winchester, and commencing, in the manner already described, his great career of usefulness and distinction. There is nothing more touching than his brief address to the people of Winchester, when he visited that place in 1858, after having become distinguished in the

councils of the nation. "Twenty-five years ago," he said, "I entered this town on foot, with my coat upon my arm, without an acquaintance within a thousand miles, and without knowing where I could get money to pay a week's board. Here I made the first six dollars I ever earned in my life, and obtained the first regular occupation that I ever pursued. For the first time in my life I felt that the responsibilities of manhood were upon me, although I was under age, for I had none to advise with, and knew none upon whom I had a right to call for assistance or friendship."

Fellow-citizens—The history of Mr. Douglas would not have been congruous, and it might have been far less distinguished, but for the hard struggles of his youth—but for his severe discipline in cultivating the intellectual powers with which nature had endowed him. We do not consider, when we commiserate the trials of the young and unfriended, toiling on their weary way to reputation and fortune, that it is this very process by which men are made successful and great. Spare, then, your sympathy for those who in their youth are contending with difficulties, and bestow it on those who, with all their needs supplied, and without the stimulant of want, are in danger of sinking into inaction and mediocrity. It is Providence which, in its mercy, throws obstacles in the path of him whom it marks

out for eminence, that he may gain strength and courage and resolution in overcoming them. It is thus that the path to greatness is made smooth in after-life by the hard trials of our early years.

At the end of three months Mr. Douglas gave up his school at Winchester and commenced the practice of the law in Jacksonville. A mere youth himself, he had already given evidence of his fitness to be a teacher of men. From this moment he became conspicuous throughout the State, and he achieved a series of triumphs unexampled in the career of any one of his age. At the bar and in the political field he took from the outset a leading part, meeting the ablest and most experienced advocates and orators in debate, and always coming out of the intellectual combats in which he was engaged, with increasing reputation. Offices poured in upon him in rapid succession. Early in 1835, fourteen months after his appearance at Winchester, he was chosen by the Legislature of the State, Attorney for the First Judicial District; in 1836 he was elected a member of the Legislature; in 1837 he was appointed Register of the Land Office under the Federal Government; and in 1841 he was chosen a Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. It is not possible within the limits of an address to say more than this: that in every position to which he was called he maintained the same high standing for

integrity, talent, and courage; and that with every advance in the importance of the offices he filled, he developed a corresponding power and capacity for the discharge of their duties.

In 1843 he was elected a representative in Congress; and from this period his reputation ceased to be local, and became identified with the history of the country. His first effort as a speaker in the Federal Legislature was as effective as his first appearance at Winchester. A bill was before the House of Representatives remitting the fine imposed on General Jackson by the Judge of the New Orleans District, after the receipt of the intelligence of peace between the United States and Great Britain, in February, 1815. During the siege the General had declared martial law, and resisted the execution of a writ of *habeas corpus* issued by the Judge. As soon as peace was proclaimed he rescinded the order declaring martial law, surrendered himself to the Court, and was fined \$1,000. The bill before Congress provided for refunding the fine. It had been advocated chiefly on the score of General Jackson's great services to the country; and it was conceded that he had exercised an arbitrary power, unwarranted by the Constitution. Mr. Douglas took different and higher ground. He contended that the Judge was wrong in imposing the fine, and that the Gene-

ral did not "assume to himself any authority which was not fully warranted by his position, his duty, and the unavoidable necessity of the case." These positions were maintained with an ability so marked as to attract and command general attention; and from that time forth he was ranked with the ablest debaters in a body numbering among its members some of the most distinguished men in the country. It was natural that Mr. Douglas, trained as his mind had been from his earliest years to habits of self-reliance, should, in dealing with constitutional questions, strike out from the beaten track of interpretation into new paths. The instance I have cited is not the only one. In a speech in the House of Representatives on the annexation of Texas, he took the ground that the right to acquire territory, one of the most vexed questions of constitutional authority, was included within the power to admit new States into the Union. So at a subsequent period, as Chairman of the Committee on Territories in the Senate, he contended that the right to establish Territorial Governments was also included in the power to admit new States. In nearly all preceding discussions it had been assumed that the right to institute governments for the Territories was included in the power "to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or

other property belonging to the United States." The propositions thus advanced by Mr. Douglas were stated and defended with his usual clearness and force, and they may be considered as constituting an essential part of the great body of commentary by which the exercise of the powers referred to is surrounded, and in regard to which divisions of opinion will continue to exist, notwithstanding the practical interpretation they have received in the legislation of the country.

In 1846, three years after his election to the House of Representatives, he was chosen a member of the Senate of the United States, and he was continued in that body by successive reëlections until his death, in June, 1861. As a member of both bodies, he took part in the discussion of nearly every great question, which arose during those eighteen years of unexampled agitation and excitement. His speeches on the annexation of Texas, the war with Mexico, our foreign policy, the aggressions of European States in America, the extension of our own territorial limits, the compromise acts of 1850, the Oregon, California, Kansas-Nebraska and Lecompton controversies, internal improvements, and incidentally the question of slavery, the prolific source of nearly all the agitations of the last quarter of a century, and of the civil war, which has drenched the country in fraternal blood, are all

marked by the clearness, vigor, and boldness which were the chief characteristics of his oratory.

It was, perhaps, in the patriotic but vain attempt to calm the prevailing excitement and close up forever the source of the dissensions which had so long distracted the country, by the preparation and defence of the Compromise Measures of 1850, that the great ability of Mr. Douglas was more signally displayed than in any other political labor of his life. In January, 1850, Mr. Clay introduced into the Senate a series of resolutions, hoping that they might be made a basis of legislation which would be satisfactory to the contending parties. While these resolutions were under consideration, Mr. Douglas, as Chairman of the Committee on Territories, introduced two bills, one for the admission of California into the Union as a State, and the other for the organization of the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, and the adjustment of the boundary question with Texas. In April a Committee of Thirteen, with Mr. Clay at its head, was appointed, and all propositions concerning the slavery question were referred to it. On the 8th of May, Mr. Clay reported from the Committee Mr. Douglas's two bills combined in one, with a single amendment. When introduced by the latter they provided that the power of the Territorial Legislature should embrace all subjects of legislation consistent with

the Constitution. As reported by Mr. Clay, the slavery question was expressly excepted from the power of legislation. This exception was subsequently rescinded, and the bill was passed as originally reported by Mr. Douglas. The Compromise Measures, so far as they related to the organization of the Territories, were his work, and they were founded on the principle that the people of the Territories, through their Legislatures, should determine the slavery question for themselves, "and have the same power over it as over all other matters affecting their internal polity."

These measures, as you all know, though they were at the Presidential election of 1852 approved by both the great political parties, were far from calming the popular excitement. And when Mr. Douglas, in 1853, as Chairman of the Committee on Territories, introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, it led to a fierce and protracted discussion. The object, as the Committee declared in a special report accompanying it, was "to organize all Territories in the future upon the principles of the Compromise Measures of 1850;" and "that these measures were intended to have a much broader and enduring effect than merely to adjust the disputed question growing out of the acquisition of Mexican territory, by prescribing certain fundamental principles, which, while they adjusted the existing difficulties,

would prescribe rules of action in all future time when new Territories were to be organized or new States to be admitted into the Union; that the principle upon which the Territories of 1850 were organized was, that the slavery question should be banished from the halls of Congress and the political arena, and referred to the Territories and States which were immediately interested in the question, and alone responsible for its existence;" and the report concluded by saying "that the bill reported by the Committee proposed, to carry into effect these principles in the precise language of the Compromise Measures of 1850." The repeal of the Missouri Compromise was incorporated into the bill at a subsequent period as an amendment, and in this form it passed both Houses of Congress and became a law in 1854. Whatever differences of opinion may exist, or may heretofore have existed in regard to these measures, no one at this day will call in question the patriotic motive by which Mr. Douglas was actuated, his deep anxiety to preserve the harmony of the Union, his sincerity, and the great intellectual power with which he maintained every position he took. No opposition in or out of the Senate, no popular clamor, no fear of personal consequences, disturbed his equanimity or his courage. He threw himself into every arena in which he was assailed, and defended himself with

an intrepidity and a manly frankness which always commanded the respect of those who differed with him, and with a vigor which often won them over to his own convictions.

At no period of his life, perhaps, did Mr. Douglas appear so remarkable as on an occasion which you all remember—when he returned to this city in 1854, where he had often been received with triumphant demonstrations of respect, and appointed a meeting in front of the North Market Hall, to speak in defence of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. It was a moment of the wildest excitement throughout the country. Kansas was rent by contending parties; associations had been organized and armed North and South; the latter to force slavery into that Territory, and the former to exclude it by force. Such was the popular indignation that it was determined Mr. Douglas should not be heard. For more than four hours he faced an angry and excited multitude, calm, undaunted, regardless of personal danger, attempting to speak in the intervals of popular clamor, and at last quietly retiring unheard, but not the less unconquered and unconquerable. Fellow-citizens—No man that ever lived could have confronted such a demonstration of popular disapproval, if he had not felt that he had done right. Courage and a consciousness of wrong are never companions of

each other; and it may be safely said that there is not one of those who was then arrayed against him that will not, now that excitement and passion have passed away, bear testimony to the sincerity of his convictions, and the moral grandeur with which he maintained and defended them.

The peculiar constitution of our Government, and the character of our people, have given an impulse to public speaking unknown to any other country. Oratory is of the natural growth of free institutions. There are no orators where there is no freedom of speech. They degenerated and disappeared in Greece after the era of Philip, and in Rome after the era of Augustus. Suffrage and education being nearly universal with us, all have the desire and the need to know whatever concerns the administration of public affairs. The communication of intelligence in regard to the designs and the policy of parties by the Press, is, to a great extent, *ex parte* and incomplete; and the defect has led to a practice peculiar to the United States, of holding assemblies of the people in which all unite for the purpose of discussing public questions, both sides being defended respectively by speakers of opposite opinions. This practice is general in the Western and Southern States, but less so in the Middle and Eastern. It is to be regretted that it is not universal. Nothing can be more fair than such a

comparison and criticism of measures and opinions. When misstatements may be instantly corrected, there is no temptation to make them, as there is in mere party meetings; and the facts of the case being undisputed, the influence of the speaker, apart from the merits of his cause, depends altogether on the power of his eloquence and the soundness of his logic. It has the advantage of carrying before the great tribunal of the people in every neighborhood (for there is scarce a locality in which such meetings are not held) the issues to be tried; and thus before the right of suffrage is exercised, every man is enabled to form an intelligent understanding of the duty he is to perform. It was in this field of public debate that Mr. Douglas's oratory was to a great extent formed. His labors, at various periods of his life, in traversing the State for the purpose of addressing these assemblies of the people, are almost incredible; and the influence he acquired is due, in a great degree, to the impression which he made on these occasions by his eloquence and his logical power.

The most memorable of these popular canvasses, and one which is not likely ever again to occur, was that of 1858, when Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglas, both candidates for the Senate at the time, and for the Presidency two years afterwards, traversed the State, speaking together at different places de-

signated by previous appointment, and published for the information of the people. The magnitude of the issues involved in the election of that year (far more vital to the peace and the permanent interests of the country than any one at that time could have foreseen, although subsequent events were even then faintly foreshadowed), the great ability of the speakers, the confidence reposed in them by the political parties which they respectively represented, and the immense multitudes that were drawn together to witness so extraordinary a contest, gave it an importance which no similar trial of intellectual power has ever attained. The relation in which they stood to each other and the whole country so soon afterwards, gives it, now that their earthly labors are ended, a posthumous character of heroism surpassing that which it possessed at the time. They may be said with perfect truth to have been the nation's representatives and the exponents of its opinions. They were actors in a political drama as far transcending in grandeur all other popular canvasses as an epic rises in dignity above a narrative of ordinary life.

In April, 1861, when the first gun was fired upon Fort Sumter, Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglas were again together, the former as President, and the latter as a Senator of the United States, taking counsel in regard to the measures to be adopted to vindicate

the insulted honor of the Government, to uphold its violated authority, and to save the Union from forcible dismemberment. Mr. Douglas advised the most ample preparations and the most vigorous action. I have the highest authority for saying that he had the entire confidence of the President; and when they parted, Mr. Douglas set out on that last great service of traversing the Free States, and rousing them by his resistless eloquence to the great duty of maintaining the Union unbroken against the gigantic treason by which its existence was threatened. And thus these two distinguished men, so recently opposed to each other, came together in friendly conference under the impulse of an exalted patriotism and an impending national peril, forgetting past differences, having no thought of themselves, and desirous only of knowing how each could do most for the common cause. It pleased God that both should perish in carrying out the great purposes of their hearts. Mr. Douglas died of a disease contracted in his herculean efforts in canvassing the North and West in support of the war. Mr. Lincoln died by a flagitious act of cowardice and crime on the very day when the old flag went up on the battlements of Fort Sumter, amid the shouts, the congratulations, and the tears of the thousands who came together to witness this significant vindication of the national

power. Happily, the one was spared till he saw the people of the Free States inspired with his own enthusiasm in the country's cause; the other till he had made his name immortal by striking from the limbs of three million human beings the manacles of slavery, and seen the last hostile force surrendered to the armies of the Union.

Fellow-citizens, there is a view of this sudden revolution in the social condition of the colored race which ought never to be overlooked. The proclamation of Mr. Lincoln, abolishing slavery, was an act of war, and extended only to the States which had taken up arms against the Government. It did not reach Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, or Tennessee, which remained true to their allegiance. Slavery still existed in those States; and for its final extinction, for the consummation of the great measure of manumission, for the obliteration of the only feature in our political Constitution which has ever been regarded as inconsistent with its fundamental principles of freedom and equality, the country is indebted to the present Chief-Magistrate of the Union. His personal influence with the South has achieved what no power of the Government could have effected—the adoption by three-fourths of the States of the constitutional amendment declaring slavery for ever abolished throughout the Union. The glory of President Lincoln was to

have emancipated, by an act of his own will, all slaves within the reach of his legitimate power. The glory of President Johnson is to have completed what the former left unfinished, and to have made the Constitution what eleven of the thirteen original parties to it desired to make it at its formation. Two of the Slave States refused to concur in the great measure of 1865; and it will be recorded in our history as one of the marvels of the times that slavery was abolished in Kentucky and Delaware by the votes of South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama. Let the fact be proclaimed in honor of the last-named States, and it need not be doubted that the time is near at hand when they will find, in high moral considerations and an immeasurably increased prosperity, cause to congratulate themselves that their names are enrolled in the great army of emancipators throughout the civilized world.

In the State of Illinois there has been no great interest for a quarter of a century with which Mr. Douglas was not in some degree identified. His views were eminently conservative. He opposed all useless expenditures, all loose interpretations of organic or administrative laws, all attempts to evade obligations resting upon legitimate compacts; and yet he was always one of the foremost in advocating judicious internal improvements. He was particu-

larly conspicuous for his persevering efforts to secure the grant of lands from the United States for the Illinois Central Railroad, to which so much of the prosperity of the State is due. It is no injustice to the Representatives in Congress from Illinois, to whose active and zealous coöperation with him that invaluable grant was obtained, to say that but for his determined opposition it would have been made to a private company, and not, as he insisted it should be, to the State. You all remember his earnest and long-continued exertions, extending through a series of years, to procure the passage of a bill by Congress for the construction of the Pacific Railroad, the most gigantic enterprise of this or any other age. He addressed public meetings and wrote papers to enforce upon the judgment of the country the necessity of executing a work which he regarded as destined to become one of the strongest bonds of union between the States and the people on the two shores of this continent, and as essential to the full development of our internal resources and our commercial capacity. He did not live to see the great enterprise commenced. But, thanks to him and those who like him foresaw its importance without being appalled by its magnitude, it is now in a course of rapid execution. It was commenced a year ago; the track-layers passed Fort Kearney on the 20th of last month; they are now

more than two hundred miles west of Omaha ; they are more than half-way across the continent ; on the 1st of April next this city will reach, by one unbroken railway communication, into the heart of the great plains which stretch from the Rocky Mountains eastward, and be within two hundred miles of Denver in Colorado. Of the three thousand three hundred miles of railroad required in this parallel of latitude to cross the continent, only one thousand three hundred will remain unfinished. There is every reason to believe, should no unforeseen event occur to retard it, that in five years from this time the work will be completed ; the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the population on their respective shores, will be united by bonds of iron which no time can break ; and a large portion of the trade with China will be turned from maritime into overland channels. The results to which this improvement must lead, no human sagacity can foresee and no human calculation compute.

In connection with this subject, let me call to your remembrance the general gloom which overspread the country when the late civil war broke out. The stoutest hearts were not without their misgivings ; and even those of us who never doubted the issue, and who were determined from the beginning to fight it out to

the end, without regard to consequences, had our hours and days of the deepest anxiety. While calling out, like the Psalmist, from the depths of our distress, "*De profundis*," the gates of our valleys and our everlasting hills were unlocked, as if in response to our cry, and treasures, which had lain buried in the darkness of ages, were poured out in boundless profusion to sustain us under the enormous burdens cast upon us by the war. To these prolific fountains of wealth the Pacific Railroad is to convey us on its way across the continent—to the Rocky Mountains, the Sierra Nevada, and the lower gold and silver-bearing ranges. The auriferous mountain chains of Europe and Asia have been penetrated and ransacked for thousands of years for the precious metals they contain. Ours are, as yet, almost untouched ; and there is every reason to believe, I had almost said to fear, that the treasures which are to be developed and distributed among us will exceed all that history has pictured of the riches of the great Oriental empires. For let us bear in our remembrance that the administration of wealth by Governments is always a source of corruption ; that communities grow less scrupulous as they grow more rich ; that simplicity of manners gives way to luxury, and economy to extravagance ; and that rivalry in industry is succeeded by that worst and most de-

moralizing of all competitions—emulation in expenditure. Social evils of this sort may be endured and made comparatively innocuous so long as public legislation is pure. I say to you, then, men of the West, look to the purity of your representatives in your State Legislatures and in Congress. Let them be men of talent, if they are also men of integrity. But let them, first of all, be honest and incorruptible. It was the good fortune of Mr. Douglas to have borne his part in the national councils when incorruptibility was deemed as essential in a public legislator as chastity in a woman, and to have gone through life during the highest party excitement without a stain on his reputation in his personal or public relations. Impure legislation was the evil for which, above all others, the founders of our Government had the deepest concern—

“ Quod nostri timuere patres.”

and it is on you as voters, holding in your hands the power of selection, that the responsibility rests of maintaining the stability of the Government by confiding its administration, and especially its legislative functions, to pure men. It has pleased the Sovereign Ruler of the universe to strengthen and uphold us in the seasons of our adversity and peril.

Let us implore Him not to leave us to ourselves in the more dangerous ordeal of our prosperity.

The oratory of Mr. Douglas was marked by the same characteristics which distinguished him in all the actions of his life. It was bold, earnest, forcible, and impressive. It is quite manifest that he never chose as a model any one of the great orators of his own time, or of the past. It is equally certain that he bestowed little labor on ornament. He seems to have had a single object in the preparation of his speeches—to express his thoughts in the simplest and most forcible words, and to give to his hearers the clearest conception of his meaning; and it was from the steady pursuit of this object that he acquired the extraordinary power which he possessed of moving other minds by pouring into them the overpowering convictions of his own. He never turned out of the direct path of logical deduction to run after a rhetorical figure. He never impaired the force of a plain proposition by loading it with unnecessary words. His style was the growth of practice in speaking rather than study; a practice which began in his boyhood, and which, through his early appointment to offices requiring argument and debate, became a part of his daily life. It is doubtful whether any man of his age ever spoke so often in courts, legislative bodies, and in popular assemblies. He may be said to have been eminently

an orator of the people. His greatest power was, perhaps, in influencing the judgments and feelings of the masses. And yet in the Senate Chamber he was scarcely less distinguished. He was for years the associate in that arena of the first men of the Union, often their opponent in debate, and never coming out of the contest without honor. Indeed, as a ready and effective debater, he had very few equals. His long and laborious training in the intellectual battle-fields of the West, his clear mental conceptions, and the direct and forcible rendering of his thoughts, gave him a power in extemporaneous discussions which few other men possessed.

It is unnecessary to say to you, who knew him so well, that there were occasions when, under the influence of strong excitement, he rose to the very highest flights of oratory—when the passion by which he was moved broke out into those pointed and epigrammatic utterances which live for years after the lips of the speaker have been closed for ever. Such an occasion occurred in the debate on the Mexican war in the House of Representatives, in 1846, when he was thirty-three years of age. Some of the ablest and most prominent members of that body had denounced the war as “unholy, unrighteous, and damnable,” when Mr. Douglas turned upon them with the following outburst of fiery

indignation: "Sir, I tell these gentlemen it requires more charity than falls to the lot of frail man to believe that the expression of such sentiments is consistent with the sincerity of their professions—with patriotism, honor, and duty to their country. Patriotism emanates from the heart; it fills the soul; inspires the whole man with a devotion to his country's cause, and speaks and acts the same language. America wants no friends, acknowledges the fidelity of no citizen who, after war is declared, condemns the justice of her cause and sympathizes with the enemy; all such are traitors in their hearts, and it only remains for them to commit some overt act for which they may be dealt with according to their deserts."

Though Mr. Douglas was always a member of the Democratic party, he never considered himself bound by his association to support measures which he believed wrong. His sense of right, his conscientious convictions of duty, were with him obligations above all party ties. It was under this high feeling of honor and self-respect, and with an independence worthy of all praise, that he broke away from the political associations with which he had been all his life identified, and denounced, resisted, and opposed with all the resistless energy of his character and with all the earnestness of his eloquence, what he denominated the Lecompton fraud.

There can be no higher evidence of his stern integrity than his course on this occasion; no better illustration of the truth, that, though party ties may bind us on questions of mere expediency, no honest man will hesitate to break away from them when the alternative is to do, on a question of principle, what he feels to be wrong.

The last public appearance of Mr. Douglas was on two occasions, one immediately succeeding the other. On his return to this State, after the attack on Fort Sumter, he addressed the members of the Legislature at their request, denouncing the rebellion, urging the oblivion of all party differences, appealing to his political friends and opponents to unite in support of the Government, and calling on the people to come in their strength to its rescue from the perils which surrounded it, and preserve the Union from being broken up by force of arms. In a speech to the people of Chicago, six days afterwards, the same earnest appeals were made to them to lay aside all considerations but that of preserving the Government of their fathers. On this occasion he was received by all parties with demonstrations of respect surpassing in enthusiasm, if possible, all other of the great ovations of his life. These speeches, though pregnant with the most determined spirit, and with an undoubting faith in the issue of the

contest, were obviously made under great depression of feeling. He had been one of the most consistent, resolute, and efficient defenders of the constitutional rights of the Southern States. He had done everything that justice and magnanimity dictated to sustain them. To the members of the Legislature he said: "Whatever errors I have committed, have been leaning too far to the Southern section of the Union against my own;" to the people of Chicago, that he had gone "to the utmost extremity of magnanimity and generosity," and that the return was "war upon the Government." It was this sense of the inutility of his own personal sacrifices and labors, and the ungenerous return on the part of those for whom he, and others acting with him, had done so much, that embittered the last days of his life and aggravated the disease under which he was laboring. A vein of sadness runs through these two last speeches, and seems now, as we look back to the events speedily following them, a prefiguration of his approaching death. On these two intellectual efforts his reputation may well rest, as examples of the purest patriotism and of an undying faith in the ultimate triumph of the cause of the Union.

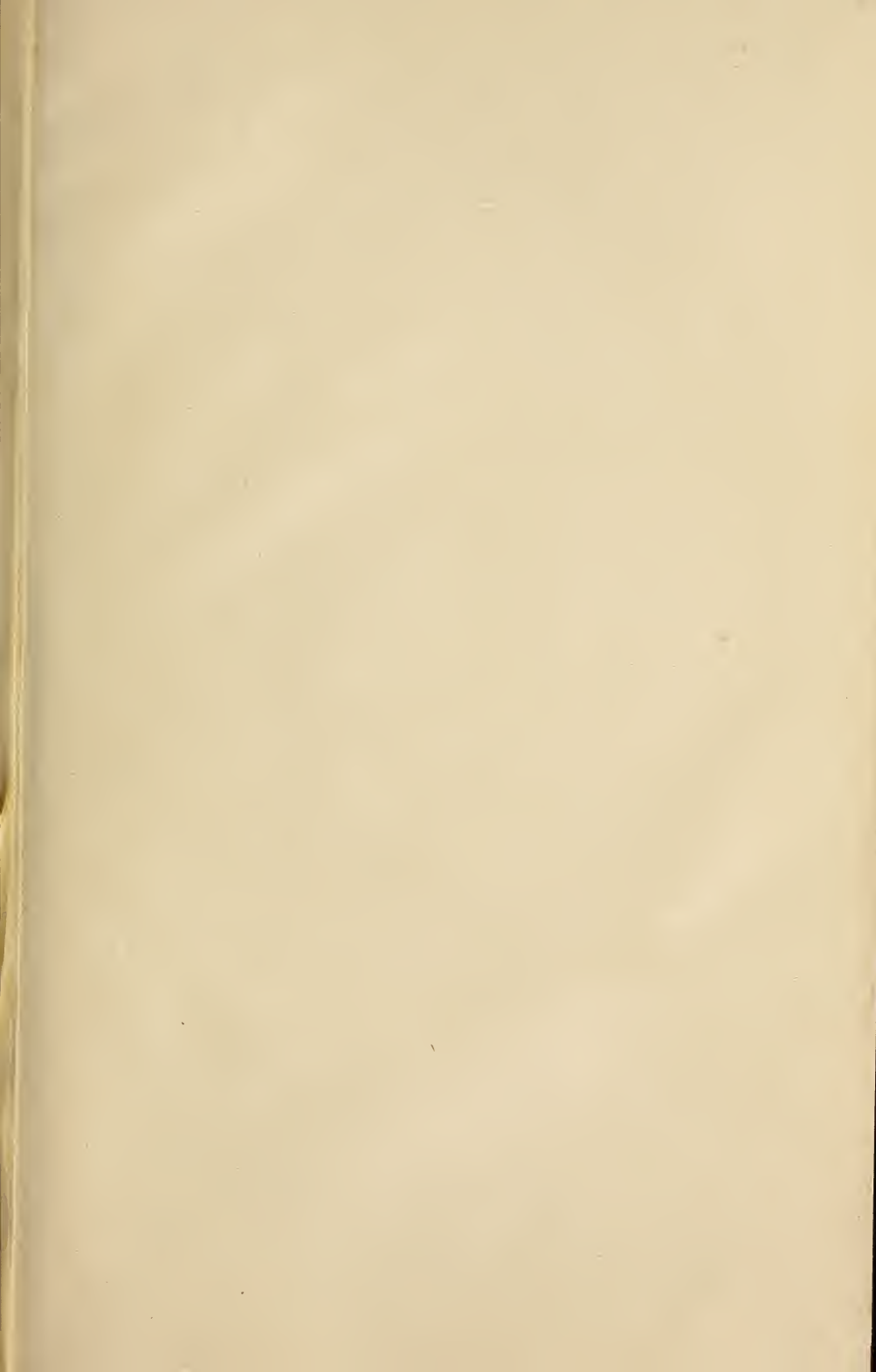
A few hundred yards west of us, shut out from our sight by an intervening grove, stands the Chicago University. In the magnitude of its extent,

the massiveness of its architecture and its well-balanced proportions, it is not only an ornament to this city, but a living testimonial of the liberality with which private wealth has contributed to the cause of science. Two hundred students are receiving instruction within its walls from a learned and accomplished faculty; and from its noble observatory astronomy holds nightly consultations with the heavenly bodies. The ample grounds, in the centre of which the institution stands, were the munificent gift of Mr. Douglas, whose name the main edifice bears. The instruction, which in his youth he labored so hard to obtain, he wished to see fully extended to the young men of this city and State. And thus shall the two structures—that of which he was one of the enlightened and liberal founders, and this of which you have laid the foundation to-day—stand side by side, we trust for ages to come, as great landmarks of civilization on the shore of Lake Michigan, where little more than a quarter of a century ago majestic nature from the beginning of time had not yet been roused from her silent and solitary sleep.

And now, fellow-citizens, our task is done—mine in this brief and imperfect delineation of the character and review of the services of Mr. Douglas; yours in laying deep in the solid earth the foundation-stone of the structure which is to

bear his name, and stand for centuries as a memorial to your children of one whose talents, political and personal integrity, and devotion to the public welfare, you would wish them to know and to emulate. In the changefulness of human things the time may come when the stone which is to surmount and crown it may be brought down to the level of that which has been laid at its base to-day. For families and races and empires and communities must, in the future as in the past, run their course and perish. But great actions, great virtues, and great thoughts, emanations and attributes of the spiritual life, types of the immortality which is to come, shall live on when all the monuments that men contrive and fashion and build up to perpetuate remembrances of themselves, shall, like them, have crumbled into their primeval dust. One of the great poets of the Augustan era, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, boasted that his works should live as long as the priest with the silent virgin should ascend the capitolium. Of the millions of treasure lavished upon the decoration of the capitol, no trace remains; its very site was long disputed; and priests and virgins, with the knowledge of the mysteries they celebrated, have been buried for more than a thousand years in the darkest oblivion. But the immortal verse, in all its purity and grace, still lives, and will make the name

and genius of its author familiar until the records of human thought shall be obliterated and lost. Thus shall the name of him, whose memory you are honoring, be as imperishable as the history of the State in whose service he lived and died ; borne on its annals as one who was identified with its progress and improvements ; who illustrated the policy and the social spirit of the great West ; who gained strength and influence from its support and confidence ; and who gloried in its energy, and its unconquerable enterprise. He will be remembered above all for those heroic words, the last he ever uttered, worthy to be graven on stone and treasured to the end of time in all patriotic hearts—words that come to us, as we stand around his grave, with a solemnity and a pathos which no language can express. When his wife bent over him as his spirit was departing, and asked him if he had anything to say to his children ; forgetting himself, his domestic ties, everything precious in life from which he was about to be severed—thinking only of his country, rent by civil strife, and overshadowed by impenetrable darkness—he replied : “ Tell them to obey the laws and support the Constitution of the Union.”







Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: May 2010

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